

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENNA 00870 041600Z

65

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SUBJECT: RESHUFFLE OF AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT PLANNED

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: KREISKY PLANS TWO-STAGE RESHUFFLE OF HIS GOVERNMENT, PROBABLY BEGINNING IN EARLY SUMMER OF THIS YEAR. TRADE UNION LEADER WEISSENBERG AND AGRICULTURE STATZ SECRETARY HAIDEN ARE NEAR CERTAIN CHOICES FOR MINISTERS OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND AGRICULTURE RESPECTIVELY. FINANCE MINISTER ANDROSCH IS STRONG FAVORITE FOR VICE CHANCELLOR POSITION. CHOICE FOR FOREIGN MINISTER'S POST APPEARS TO BE UNDECIDED; KEY FACTOR IN SELECTION WILL BE ROLE CHANCELLOR ENVISAGES FOR HIMSELF IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN NEXT FEW YEARS. GOVERNMENT RESHUFFLE IS BEING PROMPTED, ACCORDING TO KREISKY, BY DECISION OF INCUMBENTS, ALL OVER 65, TO RETIRE. END SUMMARY.

2. CHANCELLOR KREISKY HAS INDICATED, IN RESPONSE TO PRESS QUERIES IN RECENT DAYS, THAT HE WILL PROBABLY RESHUFFLE HIS GOVERNMENT LATER THIS YEAR BY REPLACING MINISTERS FOG SOCIAL AFFAIRS, AGRICULTURE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS. SINCE INCUMBENT SOCIAL AFFAIRS MINISTER IS ALSO VICE CHANCELLOR, NAMING OF NEW VICE CHANCELLOR WOULD BE NECESSARY.

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PAGE 02 VIENNA 00870 041600Z

3. KREISKY IS EXPLAINING RESHUFFLE AS PROMPTED BY

WISHES OF INCUMBENTS, ALL OF WHOM OVER RETIREMENT AGE OF 65, TO RETIRE THIS YEAR. KREISKY HAS ALSO SUGGESTED THAT RESHUFFLE COULD TAKE PLACE IN TWO STEPS-ONE IN SUMMER AND ONE IN FALL. LATTER ARRANGEMENT WOULD ALLOW, E.G. INCUMBENT SOCIAL MINISTER HAEUSER OSTENSIBLY TO COMPLETE WORK ON SEVERAL PIECES OF IMPORTANT SOCIAL AFFAIRS LEGISLATION.

4. DR. GERHARD WEISSENBERG (PRESIDENT OF UNION OF SOCIAL SERVICE WORKERS, TOP FUNCTIONARY OF LABOR CHAMBER AND TRADE UNION FEDERATION EXPERT ON SOCIAL WELFARE) SEEMS MOST LIKELY REPLACEMENT FOR HAEUSER AS SOCIAL MINISTER. THIS PROSPECT ACCORDS WITH WHAT EMBASSY HAS HEARD FROM SENIOR SOCIALIST PARTY AND AUSTRIAN TRADE UNION FEDERATION (ATUF) SOURCES WHO STRESS GENERAL PRACTICE OF GIVING SOCIAL MINISTRY TO DESIGNEE OF TRADE UNION FEDERATION AND WHO NOTE THAT WEISSENBERG ENJOYS STRONG SUPPORT OF ATUF PRESIDENT, ANTON BENYA.

5. AGRICULTURE STATE SECRETARY GUENTHER HAIDER IS CONSIDERED FAVORITE FOG MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE POSITION. HE REPORTEDLY ENJOYS RESPECT AND CONFIDENCE OF CHANCELLOR AND IN ABSENCE OF ANY APPARENT SERIOUS COMPETITOR IS LIKELY TO GET NOD FROM KREISKY.

6. FINANCE MINISTER ANDROSCH IS FRONT RUNNER FOR POSITION OF VICE CHANCELLOR. KREISKY'S PUBLIC COMMENTARIES ON PROFESSIONAL AND POLITICAL PROFILE WHICH REQUIRED FOR JOB SUGGEST THWT ANDROSCH IS CHANCELLOR'S FIRST CHOICE. ANDROSCH ALSO HAS APPARENT STRONG BACKING OF ATUF PRESIDENT. DECISION WILL BE IMPORTANT ONE FOR SOCIALISTS SINCE VICE CHANCELLOR, AS HEIR APPARENT, WILL HAVE STRONG CLAIM TO CHANCELLORSHIP WHEN KREISKY STEPS DOWN. SOME SOCIALIST PARTY LEADERSHIP ELEMENTS ARE ANGRY OVER KREISKY'S GOING PUBLIC ON GOVERNMENTAL RESHUFFLE WITHOUT FIRST DISCUSSING MATTER IN TOP PARTY COUNCILS AND THEY MAY SEIZE OCCASION OF MARCH PARTY CONGRESS TO REGISTER THEIR PIQUE WHEN VOTING FOR CANDIDATES FOR TOP PARTY OFFICES. SUCH MOVE HOWEVER IS NOT EXPECTED TO DEVELOP INTO SERIOUS CHALLENGE TO CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 VIENNA 00870 041600Z

CHANCELLOR'S EVENTUAL CHOICE FOR MINISTERIAL POSITIONS.

7. PARTY DEPUTY CHAIRMAN AND MAYOR OF VIENNA LEOPOLD GRAZ, CONSIDERED BY MANY TO BE ONLY OTHER REALISTIC CLAIMANT TO CHANCELLOR'S MANTLE AT THIS TIME, HAS TAKEN HIMSELF OUT OF RUNNING FOR VICE CHANCELLORSHIP POSITION BY ANNOUNCING HIS INTENT TO REMAIN AS MAYOR AND GOVERNOR OF AUSTRIA'S MOST POPULOUS CITY AND

PROVINCE. AT SAME TIME, GRAZ REGISTERED HIS OWN PIQUE OVER KREISKY'S DALLIANCE WITH PRESS OVER RESHUFFLE BY STATING THAT SUBJECT HAD NOT BEEN RAISED IN PARTY COUNCILS AND THAT CONSTANT (UNJUSTIFIED) PUBLIC CONJECTURE OVER HIS POLITICAL FUTURE TENDED TO DEBASE IMPORTANCE OF OFFICE OF VIENNA MAYOR AND GOVERNOR.

8. PROJECTED CHANGE AT HELM OF FOREIGN MINISTRY IS MOST INTRIGUING AND SEVERAL OTHERWISE WELL-INFORMED EMBASSY SOURCES SUGGEST THAT CHANCELLOR HIMSELF HAS NOT COME TO DECISION ON REPLACEMENT FOR INCUMBENT BIELKA. DEPARTURE POINT FOR SPECULATION OVER LIKELY SUCCESSOR IS KREISKY' KNOWN WISH TO LEAVE HIS MARK IN AUSTRIAN HISTORY AS LEADER AND STATESMAN IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS FIELD. THIS CONSIDERATION PROMPTED HIS EARLIER CHOICES OF CAREER DIPLOMATS-FIRST KIRCHSLAGER AND THEN BIELKA-FOR POST OF FOREIGN MINISTER. BOTH HAD REPUTATION PRIOR TO APPOINTMENT OF BEING COMPETENT ADMINISTRATORS NEAR RETIREMENT AGE, POLITICAL NON-AFFILIATED AND DEVOID OF ANY APPARENT POLITICAL AMBITIONS.

9. FOREGOING CONSIDERATIONS THEREFORE SUGGEST THREE POSSIBLE SCENARIOS RE FOREIGN MINISTRY STEWARDSHIP. ONE POSSIBILITY IS THAT CHANCELLOR APPOINTS YOUNG, ABLE PERSON, E.G. AUSTRIAN UN PERMREP JANKOWITSCH, WHO HAS BOTH PROFESSIONAL AND PARTY CREDENTIALS FOR JOB AND WHO, BEING AMBITIOUS, CAN BE EXPECTED TO ATTEMPT TO USE POSITION AS STEPPING STONE TO MORE SENIOR GOVERNMENT POSITION AS WAS DONE BY PREDECESSORS KREISKY AND KIRCHSLAGER. SUCH APPOINTMENT HOWEVER WOULD TEND OVER TIME TO GENERATE FRICTION BETWEEN FOREIGN MINISTER AND CHANCELLOR SINCE KREISKY HAS HIS OWN STRONG VIEWS ON SUBSTANCE AND STRATEGY IN CONDUCT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 VIENNA 00870 041600Z

10. SECOND POSSIBILITY IS FOR CHANCELLOR TO REPEAT CURRENT ARRANGEMENT OF "INTERIM SOLUTION" BY CHOOSING ANOTHER CAREER DIPLOMAT WHO WOULD MANAGE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS OF FOREIGN OFFICE AND LEAVE GRAND OUTLINE OF POLICY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION TO KREISKY. MFA SECRETARY GENERAL HEINRICH HAYMERLE (WHO FACES RETIREMENT THIS YEAR) AND MFA ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT HEAD AMBASSADOR ALOIS REITBAUER HAVE BEEN MENTIONED AS POSSIBLE CANDIDATES IN THIS CONNECTION. REITBAUER IS MORE ATTRACTIVE POLITICALLY, BEING YOUNGER IN AGE AND MEMBER OF SOCIALIST PARTY.

11. THIRD POSSIBILITY WOULD BE FOR CHANCELLOR TO POSTPONE FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER TURNOVER AT FOREIGN MINISTRY

AND KEEP INCUMBENT BIELKA ON THE JOB. BIELKA HAS SERVED
CHANCELLOR WELL, FULLY IN ACCORD WITH KREISKY'S WISHES
AND PERFORMANCE COMPARISONS BETWEEN BIELKA AND KREISKY
IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS FIELD HAVE INEVITABLY MADE KREISKY
THE UNCONTESTED STAR. BIELKA REPORTEDLY WOULD PREFER
TO STAY ON AS FOREIGN MINISTER AND IN VIEW OF NORMAL
PREFERENCE FOR KNOWN FACTOR OVER UNKNOWN ONE, KREISKY
MAY WELL OPT TO STAY WITH STATUS QUO FOR ANOTHER YEAR.
IN EMBASSY'S VIEW, SECOND OR THIRD POSSIBILITY-
NAMING OF CAREER DIPLOMAT OR KEEPING BIELKA ON
AS FOREIGN MINISTER-APPEARS MORE LIKELY KREISKY CHOICE
AT THIS JUNCTURE. BUCHANAN

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